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A MODEST ADDRESS TO THE Livery-men of London, Upon their Choice of SHERIFFS, June 24. 1681.

IT has hitherto been a Proverb, *That the Net is spread in vain in the sight of any Bird*: But such is the matchless Impudence of the Conspirators, and (as they think) so fatal the stupidity of the present Age, that though their Predecessors in the Gunpowder-Treason have given us sufficient warning of Papal Artifice and Malice, by their attempting, in those days, to cast the punishment and odium of their own Villanies upon Innocent Protestants; yet have the present Conspirators, and their Adherents, the confidence to play the same game over again; and do endeavour to skreen themselves from the Eye of Justice, and to turn its keenest edg upon their opponents, by bare suggestions, or suborned Evidence of Imaginary dangers to the Government, from the Loyal Subjects and True-hearted Protestants. For proof whereof, we need only consider, what sort of men in all probability, were more immediately aimed at, by their Sham-Accusations of Mr. *Cloypole*, by their Meal-Tub Plots, and late impudent pretensions of a New Discovery of Sir *Edmond-bury Godfrey's* Murder, by *Mac-Grass*. All which, and much more, have undeniably confirm'd the Truth of Mr. *Dugdale's* Evidence; wherein he tells us; That had their Devilish Attempts upon His Majesties Life succeeded, even the Guilt, the Horror and Detestation of so Detestable a Crime, would by those Hellish Conspirators, have been charged upon Dissenting-Protestants: And it's worth the observing, how after the Conviction of *Fitz-Harris*, a known Papist, though it openly appeared at his Tryal, that he himself gave the Heads and Instructions to Mr. *Everard* for composing that Abominable Libel, and encouraged him therein by promises of a Reward from the French Ambassador: Yet after this, could not *Heracitus* and his Tribe forbear to publish their ill-timed zeal to the Cause, but in despite of Humane Reason they would persuade the World, That this Treason also was to be filed to the account of such, as they believe they stigmatize by the very Name of *True Protestants*. For which, and their Impudent Reflections upon *Fitz-Harris's* Jury, they are highly Responsible to the particular persons they have Injur'd, and to the Common Justice of the Nation.

But to proceed; When Mrs. *Fitz-Harris* and her Maid (for Reasons best known to themselves, and which it's to be hoped, will hereafter be better known to the Nation) were pleased to Accuse the Lord *Howard*; and when thereupon on *Sunday* the 12th Instant, the Lord *Howard* was committed to the *Tower*, and the day after closely continued; It's not to be thought, with what Attention the *Masqueraders* prickt up their Ears in every Coffee-house, in hopes to have sure and certain Tidings of a *Presbyterian Plot*; nay, he was a modest Man that told you of but sixteen or seventeen Warrants to Apprehend an equal number of Protestant Lords; and it was scarce pardonable to doubt, but that some of them did abscond and fly away from Justice: As for the Lord *Howard* himself, they gave him up for a lost man; because, forsooth, he had such Papers found in his Pockets (besides all other Evidence), as would, as

doubt, in a little time run away with his Breeches. I am apt to think indeed there is something extraordinary in the case, either on the one side, or the other; and whether it were excess of Charity to prevent Infection, or what other Mystery there were in it, I know not; but though a stranger may be permitted to see a Nun through a Grate, yet I have heard that it was (on the 18th Instant) as much as the Noble Prisoners Lady could have, a glimpse of her own Husband through the Bars of a Window.

On the 20th Instant the Lord Howard was brought up by Habeas Corpus to the Kings-Bench, where he did not only make strong Professions of his own Innocence, but to the great Grief and Affliction of the Conspirators, He publicly protested, before the Reverend Judges, and that great Audience, in the most significant and binding expressions he could make use of, That he knew of no other, nor did believe there was any other Plot against the Government, but only that which was carried on by the Papists. So that the *Observer* is yet at a loss how to contrive an Intrigue to the prejudice of such Protestants, whom for his own convenience he is pleased to call *Fanatics*.

After all this, there was great noise of a clear and substantial Evidence against the Lord Howard; and on the One and Twentieth Instant; an Indictment was preferred against him to the Grand-Jury of *Edmonton*, though excepting the Case of *Fitz-Harris*, that of *Oswinston* (I am told) has most commonly been made use of in matters of this nature.

The Witnesses that gave Evidence to the Jury, were Mr. *Smith*, Mr. *Everard*, Mrs. *Fitz-Harris*, and her Maid. And if Yesterdays Print of the Evidence be true, I suppose it will not be pretended, that the Two first Witnesses said much to support the Indictment. The Account that the others give, is indeed very extraordinary; for upon further Examination, they contradicted each other, which the Publisher thought good to conceal; and it's the first time that I have heard, that Mr. *Fitz-Harris*, a known Papist, was employed in a design so much to the disadvantage of D. T. and in favour of D. M.

However, it's not to be thought, that any thing of moment could escape the observation of the Jury, especially when assisted with the advice of A. G. and S. G. who were pleased to favour them with their good Companies, for near the space of Two hours (a civility that I have not heard of, till of late.)

And yet after all that could be said, and a full and deliberate hearing, and Re-examination of Witnesses, Fourteen in Nineteen of the Jury came to a Resolution, to find *Ignoramus* on the Bill; the other Five, it seems, were under some scruples; and the Fourteen that were agreed, pressed to have the Bill endorsed accordingly; but Mr. *Ward* (a Clerk of the Crown-Office, who attended the Jury), putting the Bill up, and desiring to take it with him, but withal promising to bring it back to them the next Morning; and the Major part of the Jury, being satisfied, that nothing was wanting to perfect their finding an *Ignoramus*, but the bare Formality of an Endorsement, which might quickly be dispatch't; They therefore consented to an Adjournment till the next Morning, viz. the 22th Instant; and then meeting again, they called to Mr. *Ward* for the Bill, that it might be endorsed; but instead of that, Mr. *Ward* told them, the Bill was withdrawn by an Order from the Attorney-General; and the Jury apprehending this practice to be of dangerous Consequence, applied themselves to the Court, that their Bill might be returned; but there was no Rule of Court made to that purpose, and so the Grand-Jury of *Edmonton* was dismissed; but Mr. *Ward* was presently after Indicted by the Grand-Jury of *Oswinston*, for his practice about the aforesaid Bill.

And whoever considers this whole Affair, will find a new Argument to persuade him, that there cannot be too much care taken in choosing those Officers of Justice, to whom the Law has entrusted the returns of our Juries.